

23rd April, 1959.

COCOM Document No. 3492B

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

ON

THE COVERAGE OF ITEMS 1526 - COMMUNICATION CABLE

AND 4481 - RAILWAY SIGNALLING APPARATUS

16th April, 1959

Present: Belgium(Luxembourg), Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

References: COCOM Documents Nos. 3436 and Addendum, 3444, 3450, 3451, 3452, 3464, 3470, 3472, 3473, 3474, 3475, 3483, 3415.26/1 and 2, 3489.

1. The CHAIRMAN, after briefly summing up the situation at the close of the last meeting which the Committee had devoted to this important matter (COCOM Doc. 3489) invited Delegates to resume the discussion in an endeavour to reach a common interpretation of Items 1526 and 4481.

2. The BELGIAN Delegate said that he had been instructed to state that his authorities believed that the cables intended for the Russian railway system which the Committee was discussing fell within the scope of Item 4481. Nevertheless, the strategic interest which they might possibly assume from the communications point of view was undeniable; the strategic significance of controlling the maximum exploitation of a railway system was no less so. For this reason the Belgian Delegation, in a conciliatory spirit, considered it desirable to join in the views expressed by the majority that these cables were covered by Item 1526 and were thus under embargo. The Belgian Delegation nevertheless thought that it would be useful to re-examine the definitions of Items 1526 and 4481 in order to avoid in future any divergence of views as to the interpretation of the text of these two items. This should be done as soon as possible.

3. The CHAIRMAN noted that as the Belgian Delegation had now stated their readiness, in a spirit of compromise, to consider that the cables involved were covered by Item 1526, all Delegations - with the exception of the French Delegation - recognised, at least formally, that these cables were of strategic importance, being covered by Item 1526.

4. The FRENCH Delegate stated that his authorities had been led to note that, in spite of the good faith manifested on all sides, the experts were not at the present stage able to reach agreement on the interpretation of Items 1526 and 4481. For this reason, in a spirit of compromise, the French Government had authorised the Delegate to maintain the position he had indicated at the meeting of the 13th April (see COCOM 3489, paragraph 25) until the close of the discussions which were about to open on the amendment of the definitions of the items concerned. It was thus necessary that the Committee should without delay undertake the study of the new definitions proposed and, in view of the voluminous arguments already submitted on all sides, the French Delegation, sharing the opinion expressed by the Belgian Delegate as to the need for speed, expressed the hope that the study of the definitions would be completed within a reasonable space of time.

5. The UNITED STATES Delegate, stressing the exceptionally serious nature of the situation with which the Committee was now faced, recalled that, according to an essential principle in this organisation, when, by virtue

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of a unanimous agreement an item had been placed under embargo, it should remain under this control at least until the conclusion of a contrary agreement, also reached unanimously. It was possible at the present juncture, however, that the embargo agreed by the Committee had been thwarted by the unilateral action of one Government, whereas it was obvious that all other Member Governments had agreed to consider that the material involved was covered by an embargo definition unanimously agreed. The Delegate felt it to be his duty to underline the gravity of the present situation, not only because of the repercussions to be feared in the very important field in which the products concerned lay, but also because of the harm that it might do to the fundamental principles of cooperation in the multilateral programme to which Member Governments had voluntarily adhered. In conclusion, as the Belgian Delegation had joined the views of the majority, he expressed the hope that the French Government, with the good faith they had so far shown, would weigh up the situation as now clearly outlined, and that the Committee might soon be able to reach the result for which all hoped.

6. The ITALIAN Delegate expressed his gratitude to the Belgian Delegation for the statement they had just made despite the heavy commercial pressure to which the Belgian Government had certainly been subjected, in the same way, moreover, as the Italian Government and doubtless other Governments represented in the Committee. The position adopted in these circumstances by the Belgian Government was in conformity with the established rules and, recognising that the cables in question were covered by the present definition of Item 1526, that Government declared itself prepared - as did the Italian Government - to take part in a revision of that item. Stressing the isolated position in which the French Delegation now found itself, the Delegate believed he might recall that in 1958, before the widespread review of the definitions, no Government had taken a unilateral decision although many of them had considered that certain items on the International Lists covered products devoid of all strategic value. The Delegate again stated in conclusion that his Delegation were prepared to take part in the review of the definitions concerned but wished to stress that in the absence of an agreement to amend these definitions, export of the cables would involve a commercial discrimination which would endanger the solidarity and cooperation of the Member Governments.

7. The UNITED KINGDOM Delegate stated that he would merely repeat his authorities' opinion that, the cables involved being covered by Item 1526, no export should take place to Communist countries. As to the possible amendment of the items concerned, the Delegate stressed the fact that the Committee should be allowed sufficient time to carry out a thorough examination of the question.

8. The FRENCH Delegate, replying to the Italian Delegate's remarks, stated that - as the United States Delegate had noted - the French authorities had in all good faith granted the authorisation to export the cables concerned, which they considered to fall under a Watch List item. Thus there had not been any unilateral action when this authorisation had been given and, in agreeing to take the necessary steps to prevent the export of the cables until the Committee had finished its examination of the new definitions of Items 1526 and 4481, the French authorities had shown proof of the primary interest which they attached to this examination. The Delegation was surprised that some Delegations accorded so much importance to considerations of a commercial nature: if these Delegations really considered that there had been on the part of the French authorities an interpretation which was different from that of the majority, it might be asked whether this interpretation should really be considered as a precedent which should be followed.

9. Replying next to the United States Delegate's remark to the effect that it was as the result of a unanimous agreement that in 1955 Item 1526 had been placed under embargo, the French Delegate stated that his Delegation

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had never interpreted Item 1526 as covering railway signalling cables, which they had considered as lying within the scope of Item 1481 (which had since been deleted). Thus there had existed a divergence of interpretation from the very outset of the creation of Item 1526. The Delegate pointed out once more that all the most eminently competent civil and military experts consulted by the French Government had held that what was involved was a tele-signalling cable which might possibly serve for service communications from station to station, which in all Western European countries were assimilated to railway signalling. After remarking that there were divergencies of view of a technical nature between Delegations as to the interpretation of the items concerned, divergencies which should not be underestimated, the Delegate expressed the hope that the very thorough discussion which was to be held would permit of their settlement.

10. The CHAIRMAN stated that, in order to clarify the meaning of the latest French statements and to see how the discussions should proceed in future, he felt he should put the following two questions to the French Delegation: did they still consider that the cables concerned were not covered by Item 1526? Did they still consider that these cables were not strategic?

11. The FRENCH Delegate replied in the affirmative to these two questions, but added that, in spite of their profound conviction, the French Delegation remained open to the arguments which might be submitted to them and reserved the right to produce new arguments, especially those emanating from the French Staff. Being convinced of the validity of these arguments, the Delegate expressed the hope that the discussions which were to be held regarding the amendments to the definitions would enable his Delegation to convince the Committee. In this connexion he was contemplating an invitation to the members of the Committee to come and examine the S.N.C.F. cable equipping the Dôle-Vallorbe line, which was used exclusively for signalling and whose composition was as follows: one 20/10 mm. quad balanced up to 20,000 cycles per second, insulated with polyethylene, and nine peripheral 10/10 mm. quads insulated with polyethylene. According to the interpretation now given to Item 1526 by the majority of the Committee, this cable would be under embargo; it nevertheless served exclusively for direction switching, for approach switching, for the mechanical operation of semaphores, signals, alarm signals, track circuit repeaters, slowing-down devices, level crossings and speed indicator tables, and for automatic feed transfer control; this cable, it should be stressed once more, did not comprise any telephonic circuit.

12. In reply to a question from the Italian Delegate as to whether the cable he had just described could be used for high frequency communications, the FRENCH Delegate stated that, according to his information, it was impossible to provide for long-distance communications without an internal screen and for this reason, despite the existence in France of P.T.T. (Post Office) cables far larger than the S.N.C.F. Paris-Strasbourg cable with 37 quads, it had been necessary to instal in the East for NATO communications not only a special coaxial cable, but also a Hertzian beam system with 72 channels. French military authorities considered furthermore that in the event of wholesale destruction of communications cable in France it would be impossible to use S.N.C.F. cables even as emergency equipment.

13. The UNITED STATES Delegate stated that, in the view of his Delegation's experts, the most modern CTC systems only required one pair of conductors and that railway communications could be handled with 4 conductors. He stressed moreover that the Soviet railway system bore a close resemblance to the United States system, as the problems to be resolved were the same: distances, loads, etc.. The Delegate stated, to be more exact, that the CTC systems used in the Soviet Union were directly inspired by those used in the United States. Replying to a remark by the French Delegate to the effect that for long-distance communications it was necessary to have

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cables equipped with screens, the Delegate stated that cables without screens would be perfectly suitable for long-distance communications provided that they were equipped with balancing filters and repeaters, this last characteristic moreover being required for all types of cables.

14. Turning to the more general aspect of the question at issue, the Delegate emphasized that if, in conformity with normal practice, the French Government had consulted the Committee before granting an authorisation to start manufacture of the cables, they would have learnt the views which had now been expressed by fourteen participating countries who considered that the product concerned was covered by Item 1526; the French Government now had an opportunity of taking action which would re-establish the situation as it would have been several months ago: in other words, the French authorities should be prepared to cancel the licence they had granted if the Committee did not reach unanimous agreement to free the cables concerned.

15. In reply to a question by the Italian Delegate the FRENCH Delegate stated that his Government maintained the position indicated at the previous meeting (COCOM 3489, paragraph 29) and would continue to do so until the close of the study of the amendment of Items 1526 and 4481, expressing the hope nevertheless that in view of the abundant arguments already put forward, the discussions might be closed within a reasonable space of time.

16. The UNITED STATES Delegate stated that his Delegation had never been opposed to the discussion of any subject whatsoever. He stated nevertheless that the amendment of the items now involved seemed to him to give rise to great difficulties. As his Government up to the present had been preoccupied rather with the immediate problem of the contemplated exports, he had no precise instructions on the proposals for new definitions which had been submitted and doubted whether he would receive them before the beginning of the following week. The United States Delegation would nevertheless take part in the discussion in the most constructive manner possible.

17. The ITALIAN Delegate noted that the Committee's discussions seemed to have made a little progress and allowed of some hope. He thanked the French Delegate for the particulars he had just given as to his Government's position and agreed as to the impossibility of foreseeing the future; he nevertheless wished to emphasize once more the considerable commercial pressure which was being exerted on various member Governments and the more general anxiety felt in the capitals of participating countries about the danger of compromising the cooperation assured by the Coordinating Committee.

18. The COMMITTEE agreed that on the 20th April they would begin discussions for the amendment of Items 1526 and 4481.

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